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A
L E T T E R

T O

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIX-PENCE:

A
L E T T E R
T O
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
CHARLES JAMES FOX,
O N
THE LATE CONDUCT
O F
H I S P A R T Y.

L O N D O N :

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A

L E T T E R

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

S I R,

WHEN the Constitution is assaulted,
and the Rights of Parliament threatened with invasion, it is the duty of honest men to exert themselves, and endeavour to obviate the impending danger. If this maxim be true in general, it is more especially so, when a desperate and wicked Faction avail themselves of a national calamity, in order to accomplish their designs: in proportion to the weakness of that power
B which

which formerly controlled them, the vigilance of the people should increase, and, perhaps, there never was a period in which our united efforts were more requisite, than at present.

It seldom happens, that the cause of Monarchs is the cause of Liberty ;—it is a singular concurrence, reserved for the present crisis, when the same blow which is levelled at the King, endangers the Constitution ;—the same hand which grasps at his prerogative, menaces our Rights ;—when we are embarked in a common cause with him, and must either vindicate his interests, or desert our own.

These motives have induced me to declare my sentiments on the conduct of your Party ; and, if in the discussion, I frequently express myself with energy let it be remembered, that, at such a moment, moderation would be almost criminal ; and that, when we are attacked with violence, we should certainly defend ourselves with spirit. For
my

my own part, I confess my enthusiasm for the public good ; and pity the heart that can beat with languid temperance, when our prime interests are at stake.

I think, Sir, you will not deny, that the conduct of public men, is liable to public investigation, and (if criminal) to public censure. I therefore shall write with freedom, and I address myself to you, as the ostensible Leader of Opposition ; others for aught I know, may have greater influence at Carlton-house, and may have been more employed in wheedling the Recruits, and bribing the Deserters ; but *you*, at least have the odious distinction of heading the *trained-bands* ; to you, therefore, I apply, and, through you, to the whole body of your Faction.

It is natural, at this momentous period, to survey the character of those, who are destined to fill the offices of State. In this country an Opposition (if possessed of any merit) stands always upon favourable ground ;

the people being naturally jealous of a Minister, and readily supporting those, whose occupation is to scrutinize his conduct.—How then does it happen, that, with this circumstance in your favour, the tide of popularity should set against you ; that the bare prospect of your appointment, should create an universal panick, and debase the credit of the nation ? We may trace the cause of this phaenomenon in the sketch of your public and private life : born with talents to adorn society and benefit the nation, you have constantly misapplied them to the propagation of immorality, and the indulgence of your own ambition. Your partizans may boast of your merits with the people ; I protest, for my part, that I am unacquainted with those merits, and ignorant of any service you may have rendered to your country.

To you, indeed, and to some of your associates, we are indebted for the singular distinction between private and public character ; a refinement, too subtle for my intellects

lects to comprehend. So antiquated are my notions, that I still consider private reputation as the safest ground of public confidence, and feel an unconquerable impulse to mistrust the *official virtue* which is grafted on *domestic vice*. If a man be profligate in morals; if he live by depredations, on society; if he defraud his tradesmen, if he plunder at the club, or pilfer at the Opera, am I not justified in suspecting, that he will pillage the whole nation if he has it in his power? why should he spare the stranger, when he will not spare his comrades? I cannot place dependance on his principles, I can fancy no security against his abuse of power, except by withholding the power itself. As a private man, I care not to what strumpet you attach yourself; I care not who are the companions of your debaucheries, or your partners in the Faro-Bank: yet you ought to know, Sir, that something is due to decency: a fool may obtain forgiveness for the violation of decorum; but a man of sense, who ostentatiously displays his vices, and sets opinion at defiance, commits an insult

on the understanding, as well as on the morals, of mankind.

To you, also, we are indebted, that women, of the highest ranks, have departed from the modest and meek deportment, that once characterized the English Ladies. You have taught them to associate with shameless prostitutes, and drunken voters: you persuaded them to mingle in the tumult of Elections, to expose their persons to degrading insults, to adulterate the true dignity and sterling value of their sex. I know not what gratitude these ladies may profess for your kind instructions; but sure I am, that no man, who is solicitous for the honour of his wife or daughters, can thank you for procuring such examples for their imitation.

But, Sir, let us admit your beloved maxim, that political reputation should be totally unconnected with private qualities, and that public virtue is compatible with domestic vice: yet even upon this ground,
you

you are not entitled to our confidence ; for how can we rely upon the conduct of that man, whose principles are subject to perpetual fluctuation ? if you were steady in your sentiments, whatever they might be, we could determine how far to deal with you ; but if they vary with every change of circumstance ; if you brawl for privilege to entrap the whigs, and bully for prerogative to allure the tories, no party can with prudence trust you. Your conduct has, indeed, been consistent in one respect, and only one ; it has uniformly been directed to the views of your own ambition, without regard to constitutional motives, or to national advantage :—but, independently of this consideration, no two men were ever more at variance with each other, than you are with yourself. In the circle of political opinions, your career began at the point of arbitrary power, and after flaming through the opposite degrees of licentious freedom, you waned in the path of aristocracy, and are now returned to your primitive situation ; the champion of prerogative, the deadly foe to liberty.

Why, Sir, I thought that even Mr. P——s, though allured by the promised honours of a Peerage, would have shrunk from such glaring inconsistency. Alas! can we blame the gentleman for wishing to escape the disgraceful overthrow that awaits him in the country?

It must be owned that you are wonderfully skilled in contradictions, the most eccentric alchemist could not imagine a mixture more discordant, than your hateful union* with *Lord North*, an instance of abandoned prostitution which we have not yet forgotten, nor ever can forget, whilst we remember *Mr. Fox*. — But, without recurring to that memorable period, let us contrast your present doctrine with professions of a later date. I suppose you recollect the time, when you maintained the omnipotence

* *Ambitio multos mortales falsos fieri subegit; aliud clausum in pectore, aliud promptum in linguâ habere; Amicitias Inimicitiasque, non ex re, sed ex commodo æstimare; magisque vultum, quam ingenium bonum habere. Sall: in bell: Cat:*

potence of the House of Commons, which you *then* were pleased to dignify with the name of Parliament. You now assert, that all the legislative Powers are vested in the *Prince of Wales*; for surely to transfer the Sovereign authority is an act of Legislation. You formerly declared that a Minister ought not to retain his place, much less to undertake it, without the confidence of the House of Commons: by what subtilty of Logic will you reconcile your present conduct to that assertion? although, when you succeed to power, *Mr. Pitt* may nobly scorn to practise the indiscriminate opposition, which he has experienced from you; it will still be undeniably true, that you possess not the confidence of Parliament, nor any glimpse of national esteem.—There was a moment too, when you thought that majorities in the House of Commons were entitled, not only to respect, but to the submission of his *Majesty* and the House of Peers. What is the language of to-day? Why, that majorities are nothing, and are not to be regarded. Whence we may draw the following conclusion,

clusion, *viz.* that superior numbers are infallible, if obedient to your dictate, but erroneous and contemptible whenever they dissent from it: nay, your present doctrine is not only contradictory of that which you formerly professed, but cannot be reconciled even to itself: for whilst you assert that the Rights of the reigning Monarch are defeasible, and actually null; you maintain that those of the *Heir Apparent* are *indefeasible*; which amounts to this, that Possession is vacancy, and that Reversion is true Possession. In short, Sir, it would be tedious, and almost impossible, to pursue you through the labyrinth of incoherencies in which you are involved, and from which you could not disengage yourself by explanation or retraction. It is indeed remarkable that all the Chiefs of opposition have been obliged to qualify or disavow the doctrine, and expressions which they have advanced: one of them, however, notwithstanding the versatility of his genius, and his turn for quibble, has “damned himself to everlasting fame,” by threatening the House of Commons

mons with the anger of the *Prince of Wales*, unless they acquiesced in his usurpation: in the present age a Parliament of France would not have endured the menace. We may reasonably judge that a cause is bad, when it cannot be supported without subterfuge and equivocation. That the maniac *Burke*, should commit egregious blunders, is not surprising; but that the subtle *Sheridan*, and the wily *Loughborough* should be entangled in their own trammels, is a proof of the sad shifts to which they are reduced. I hope experience will soon convince them, that, crooked policy is a weed which thrives not in British Soil. After this short examination of your character and principles, it is but just to add that, bad as they appear, some Members of the *Pandemonium* are even worse. You are truly singular in the choice of your connexions; surrounded by Men of notorious depravity, ruined in their fortunes, desperate in enterprize; whose combination is a morbid humour in the body politic of this Country, a foul disease in our moral constitution, which, if suffered to increase, will

will render us disgusting and infectious to all Europe. I know not whether we are more disgraced by the existence of such Men,* and such principles as they profess, or more honoured by opposing them with firmness and success.

I do believe that *some* of that society are ripe for deeds the most atrocious, and would rather perpetrate any act of desperation, than resign their Asiatic dreams. I know the proceedings at that community of which it is almost ignominious to be a member—I know the barbarous jests, the indecent language they have held on a melancholy subject: I have heard expressions at which virtue would swell with indignation, and humanity would shrink with horror.

I shall

* N m quicumque impudicus, adulter, ganeo aleâ, manu, ventre, pene, bona patria laceraverat, quique alienum æs grande conflaverat ; ---postremò omnes quos flagitium, egestas, conscius animus exagitabat. *Illi Catilinæ proximi, familiaresque erant.* Sall : in bell ; Cat :

I shall be told perhaps, that the persons of whom I speak are Men of Fashion, Honour and Liberality: I care not under what title you specify their qualities; the perversion of language cannot alter facts. *Jam pridem nos vera rerum vocabula amisimus; quia BONA ALIENA LARGIRI, Liberalitas;* MALARUM RERUM AUDACIA, fortitudo vocatur.*

However, I am willing to allow, that in this farrago, there are some *ingredients* of a better quality: some honesty, and more talents; but, unhappily, they are not united: I defy you to produce a single instance, in your Party, of an unimpeachable character, joined to great abilities.—If there be a
man

* It is to be lamented that wit should ever be misapplied to the establishment of immoral sentiments. The author of "The School for Scandal," makes his hero, upon giving away a sum of money which was due to his creditors, break forth into the following rhapsody: "Justice is an old, lame, hobbling bellman, and I can't get her to keep pace with generosity, for the soul of me." The author should recollect that to lavish the property of others, is no greater proof of *Generosity* than of *Justice*.

man of this description let him be produced—let him be the *real*, as well as *nominal* minister of the *Regent* : but, if no such person can be found amongst you, it is in vain to dwell upon the virtues of other men : we are not to learn, that good hearts may be duped by designing men.

Besides, we have seen already, that the rectitude of these very Men, may be warped by their ambition : we have not yet forgotten their concurrence in the odious coalition, the audacious India-Bill, and other execrable measures.

I confess too, that some of your adherents possess an hereditary title to respect, and a sort of consequence, derived as much from the merit of their progenitors, as from their elevated rank, or ample fortunes : but if these men depart from the line of conduct by which their Ancestors were immortalized ; if they commit a kind of parricide on the lustre of their names, surely they become

more criminal, and more contemptible, than the very rabble whom they join.

Having taken this cursory view of our future governors, and the estimation in which they stand, I shall now proceed to the main object of this letter, the examination of their conduct in the present crisis.—As to the question of inherent Right, I do not mean to enter upon that discussion; it already is decided by the voice of Parliament, and the sentiments of all the nation. It appears, indeed, wonderful at first, that you should dare to assert a doctrine so unpopular; a position not only false in principle, and dangerous in tendency, but incongruous with that system of high-flown liberty, which you have sometimes found convenient to maintain. But the wonder ceases, when we consider that you no longer stand upon the ground of popular approbation, but upon that of Royal influence; that your object is in fact the same, though you pursue it in an opposite direction; and that, since you cannot be the Minister of the
 People,

People, you are determined to be the Minister of the Regent, in defiance of the People. In support of this laudable resolution, you have detected a spirit in the Constitution, with which the gentlemen of the Robe were certainly not acquainted ; a spirit of usurpation, a spirit of injustice and inhumanity, a spirit of succession before a vacancy, and of powers not deriving from the people. These, Sir, are discoveries which you may claim without any fear of competition ; but which, I think, will not augment your popularity. With the fine drawn quibbles and elaborate logic, of my *Lord Chief Justice*, I have no concern, not having the honour of belonging to his profession. But, I thank God that, without belonging to it, we may catch the genius of the British Constitution ; without belonging to it, we may discriminate between good and evil, and imbibe the principles of humanity and justice. It is enough for me, that all the honest and able Lawyers in the kingdom reprobate your doctrine. Let us, therefore, quit a subject, of which, I believe, you heartily

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repent

repent the introduction ; and instead of dwelling upon your *assertions*, let us consider their obvious and direct *tendency*.

Sir, I maintain that they lead to treason ; you will pardon the harshness of this expression ; I am used to the language of simple truth, and love not to qualify or disguise it. Sophistry and eloquence may give an air of plausibility to any cause ; but if the positions of your party be stripped of the meretricious colours with which they have been adorned, if submitted to the eye of observation in their simple and unvarnished form, any one may perceive the diabolical attempt to tear the Diadem from the father's brow, and to place it on the son:---Not from attachment to the *Prince of Wales*, (he cannot surely be the dupe of such professions) but to satiate the ravenous cravings of insolvency and ambition. This is not a competition between you and *Mr. Pitt*, but between the *Heir Apparent* and his unhappy father ; it is not only, who shall be the *Minister*, but who shall be the *King*. I would

not be understood to impute a project so infernal to the *Prince* himself, but to the party by whom he is supported, by whom he is advised, and by whom he is, at least I hope he is, deceived. No, Sir! notwithstanding all appearances and reports; notwithstanding his political connexions; notwithstanding his confidence even in *Mr. Sheridan*, I will not suppose him such a monster of depravity; I will not believe that he can triumph in a parent's malady, and exaggerate the symptoms; nor that he is eager to take advantage of this calamity, in order to glut the unnatural appetite of a premature ambition. Yet, Sir, I cannot but reflect, that as the name of his Royal Highness is unfortunately coupled with your party, he might have stepped forward upon this occasion with peculiar dignity, and the most exalted policy, to disavow your measures. Princes, I am told, have lately condescended to borrow the rhetoric of their inferiors; I will presume therefore to suppose the following words spoken by the *Heir Apparent*: “ My fellow subjects,” he should have said, “ I disclaim all title to the
“ Regency,

“ Régency, except that best and dearest
 “ title, the free choice and preference of
 “ the nation. I disavow the persons, who,
 “ without my knowledge or concurrence,
 “ have asserted for me rights, which do not
 “ belong to me, and are more solicitous for
 “ their own interest than for my honour.
 “ Although some of them have been ho-
 “ noured with my notice, though I ad-
 “ mire their talents, and even credit their
 “ professions, yet the intrigues of Faction
 “ are below the dignity of my state, and I
 “ scorn to be supported by dishonourable
 “ means.

“ I am aware, that a thirst for untimely
 “ Power, and an intimate combination with
 “ my Father’s enemies, will neither con-
 “ ciliate your esteem, nor engage your con-
 “ fidence : and, I trust, that you think too
 “ highly of my heart and understanding,
 “ to imagine that I wantonly can sacrifice
 “ your affection, or devote my patrimonial
 “ reversion to rapacity and ruin. If the
 “ Parliament shall think proper to intrust
 “ me with the reins of Government, du-
 C ring

“ ring the illness of my Father, I will en-
 “ deavour to prove that I deserve their con-
 “ fidence : I wish for those powers alone,
 “ which the present exigence requires,
 “ knowing that I am not the Owner but
 “ the Steward of the Crown. I shall
 “ therefore labour, as an honest Steward
 “ ought, to discharge my office to the satis-
 “ faction of my Father, and for the bene-
 “ fit of his estates; and feeling myself ac-
 “ countable to him for all I do, I will do
 “ nothing willingly to displease him.”—
 Had the *Prince of Wales* expressed himself in
 this manner, and acted consistently with his
 expressions, he would have gained the praise
 and credit of the nation, his government
 would have rested on a firm establishment,
 and he would not have exposed himself to
 mortification and defeat.

But such conduct would have frustrated
 the views of Opposition. Instead of it,
 therefore, we see cabals and jealousies, fac-
 tions within factions, parliamentary seduc-
 tion, medical intrigues, and newspaper fabri-
 cations. The beams of the RISING SUN
 have

have been collected on the putrid elements of corruption; and every artifice has been employed to procure the *grant* of those prerogatives, which you vainly laboured to seize by force. The question of Right being settled beyond dispute, you had next recourse to the argument of *expedience*, and would invest his Royal Highness with the plenitude of regal powers, on motives of political propriety. As this question, like the other, has undergone a full investigation, I shall make but few remarks upon it. I must observe, however, that the following proposition ought to be the groundwork of all reasoning on this subject; namely, that, since we trust his Royal Highness with the Government, not for the purposes of his own ambition—not to gratify the leeches that surround him—but for the benefit of his Father, and the welfare of his Father's subjects; it follows, that such powers only should be granted as may be thought conducive to those ends. Let it then be shewn that some national advantage will accrue from ennobling Mr. *Porvys*, or any of the ample catalogue that Mr. *Burke* so obliging-

ly unfolded ; or let it be simply ascertained, that his *Majesty*, whenever he recovers, will be charmed to find these Gentlemen enrolled amongst the Peerage : in either of these cases we might permit this exercise of the royal functions ; but unless these demonstrations can be given, let us not be prodigal of the King's authority, but remember that *He*, and *not his son*, is still the source of honour, *for he still is King*.

The same argument extends to the other limitations ; and it would, I conceive, be extremely difficult to prove, that the dismissal of the present household, and the substitution of men, who are strongly adverse to the Sovereign, would be either beneficial to the nation, or agreeable to his *Majesty*. Besides, our pride, as Britons, should forbid us to leave him destitute in his calamity. Should we not blush to hear it said by foreigners, that the *English* tamely suffered their Chief Magistrate, the person who represents the whole majesty of the Empire, to be insulted in his sickness, and plundered not only of his regal dignity, but even his domestic honours ?—I must not omit another remark, on the subject of Restrictions,

strictions, because it refers to some of your
 declarations in the House of Commons :
 First, you accuse Mr. Pitt of attacking the
 Prerogative, though it is notorious to all
 the world that he is protecting it from usur-
 pation ; then recollecting how ill it would
 become the quondam Patriot to enter the
 lists as Knight Errant of Prerogative, you
 own it to be true, that you have been a bit-
 ter foe to it when it was in vigour, but
 would scorn to take advantage of its weak
 and defenceless state. In saying this, were
 you not aware to what an answer you ex-
 posed yourself ? Were you not, even at the
 very moment, striving to take a cruel and
 mean advantage of the *King's* misfortune ?
 Did you not aim a mortal blow at his au-
 thority, when he was not able to resist ? And
 is this the generous, the manly conduct of
 which you boast ? The Prerogative indeed
 you would now preserve entire, because you
 hoped to profit by it ; but the person of the
 Monarch you would injure and insult, tho'
 afflicted with disease, and disabled by cala-
 mity.

But, Sir, you have urged a most extraordinary reason for assigning *all* the Regal Powers to the *Prince of Wales*, viz. the confidence which we place in the Virtues of his Royal Highness, and the moral certainty to be deduced from them, that he never will abuse the Prerogatives with which he may be intrusted. As I understand your argument, we may reduce it to the following syllogism: If the Regent is popular and virtuous, he ought to be vested with ample powers; but he is exemplary in his morals, eminent for his piety, singular for filial affection, justly and universally adored throughout the nation; therefore we can do no less than transfer to him the sceptre of his Father, who being guilty of infirmity, and convicted of disease, has forfeited all title to the throne.

In private life, Sir, confidence may be an amiable quality, but it is a dangerous principle in the delegation of authority. If it be an argument for one extension, it may apply to any; and thus we may trust away all our liberties and happiness. It is indeed
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the peculiar genius of our constitution to be jealous of executive power, and we are naturally led to favour its opposers. Even you, Sir, had formerly some credit with the people, on this very ground; but you have taught them to be more sparing of their confidence in future.

Besides, unluckily for your argument, it somehow happens, that although the *Prince of Wales* may in fact possess all those admirable qualities which you ascribe to him, the people of England do not allow him credit for them; so that your reasoning fails in the very premises. It was ingeniously pushed in the House of Commons, because it could not there be contradicted: *Mr. Pitt* could not with propriety controvert the position, whatever he might think. Certain however it is, that, since the Reign of *Charles* the II. no Heir to the Crown of England has possessed so small a portion of national esteem and love. It generally happens, that the people are eager to extol the merits of their future Monarch, without examining minutely his pretensions to them: frequently

too their zeal has soon subsided from experience. But here in opposition to the common rule, the Prince begins with being hated : I sincerely wish that the contrast may be perfect, and that he may end with being loved. At the commencement of this unhappy business, I could certainly have pointed out a line of conduct, by which he might have made himself as popular and powerful as any Prince that has swayed the British Empire. And I confess that, judging from the high opinion of his understanding, which I had been led to entertain, I thought he would have eagerly seized the opportunity of discarding his retinue of adventurers and buffoons : at some period he will be obliged to undertake this necessary measure ; at no period could he do it with more honour to himself, or with more security of public approbation.

It would be foreign to my purpose were I to investigate the *causes* of this strange unpopularity ; but since the fact is sufficiently notorious, I will just observe, that, in one point of view, it is perhaps fortunate

nate for the nation ; for let us suppose that the present state of popularity was reversed ; that our beloved Monarch was detested, and the *Prince of Wales* adored ; that you, Sir, had not forfeited all pretensions to our confidence ; and that *Mr. Pitt* was as odious as he is revered : I tremble to see what might have been the consequence ; we might have overlooked the Rights of the *King*, and the safety of the Constitution ; and transmitted a precedent of injustice and usurpation to future ages.

Before I quit the subject of popularity, I will venture to submit one article of advice to the august Personage in question ; advice, in which you, I believe, will very readily coincide. Let him beware of favouritism : it is a plant which does not flourish in this climate, and, if he tries to rear it, will choke the growth of popular affection.—Does it, indeed, besit a *Prince of Wales* to be the puppet of such a thing as *Sheridan* ? or if his Royal Highness be willing to bear such degradation, can he think that the nation will be governed by his favourite ?—

Thank

Thank God ! we are not yet so humbled. Eloquence may captivate the mob, and cunning may deceive them : but men of sense will examine characters, and search for merits : they know, that the secret of conducting Empires lies not in flowers of fancy, nor in elegance of diction : it requires the lofty genius of a *Pitt*, not the scenic talents of a *Mr. Sheridan*. The predecessor of this person in the management of *Drury Lane*, was endowed with faculties of a similar description ; equal in social qualities, not inferior perhaps in composition, and far superior in the powers of declamation. Besides, *Garrick* was an honest man ; at least I have not heard that he was guilty of fraudulent transactions at any Theatre : he was not a bankrupt in fortune, or in fame. Yet so far was he from the strange ambition of soaring from the conduct of a Play-house, to the government of Empires, that he even had the modesty to decline a seat in Parliament. Were we, Sir, reduced to the choice of evils, we should certainly prefer you to *Mr. Sheridan* : you are at least a manly character : you do not skulk behind
the

the curtain, and give advice, that you have not the courage to avow. You attack the Constitution it is true, but you do it openly, and disdain to stab it in the dark, with the mean malice of Italian Policy.

As I am ready to give praise were it is due, I embrace this opportunity of applauding even you, for resolving to exclude this person from the Cabinet, especially from the Exchequer, for which, it seems, he had a longing inclination. The appointment of *Lord John* is, in truth, ridiculous enough, when we consider whom he will succeed; but the other would have been a lamentable jest, a tragifarcical burlesque on revenue and œconomy.— *Mr. Sheridan* at the head of our finances! Why, Sir, the streets of *Paris* would be illuminated; public rejoicings would be made, and thanksgivings offered up to Heaven, by all the enemies of the British nation.

Sir, the means which have been pursued to accomplish your design, are as infamous as the design itself. I pass by the influence,
the

the promises, the menaces, the solicitations, the allurements, which have been employed ; methods resorted to more successfully in the Reign of your worthy coadjutor *Lord North*, though at that time they had not the honour of your approbation : yet I will assert, that they were never carried to such extremes of infamy as at present ; the integrity of Parliament was never wooed with such constant assiduity, nor insulted with such public offers : even Princes have disgraced themselves by personal applications, and exposed themselves to mortifying disappointments : nay, one of them has been seen openly to canvass Officers on parade, and assure them that promotion in the army depended on their votes in Parliament.— But, Sir, the pains taken to infect the mind, and pervert the judgment of the public, exceed even your senatorial exertions, and betray a well-founded apprehension, that the people is averse to your infernal plans. Besides the hand-bills so industriously spread throughout the Country, inconceivable efforts have been made to buy the public prints, some of which may be justly deemed the common-sewers of scurrility and falsehood.

falsehood. It is notorious, that a considerable sum was paid for the purchase of one Newspaper, and that the agreement was signed by a servant of his Royal Highness : and it is remarkable, that the paper so purchased, *and so directed*, has been one of the most virulent and atrocious in its calumnies against an amiable and exalted female : a fact, on which I forbear to make an obvious but mournful comment.

Through these, and other channels, with the auxiliary efforts of a certain medico-political gossip, the most scandalous and abominable falsehoods have been diffused ; some of them I shall proceed to notice ; with this preliminary observation, that the cause must indeed be bad, which requires or resorts to such expedients.

1st. Infinite pains have been employed to represent the King's actual condition, and likelihood of his recovery, in the most unfavourable light. Yet the Committee, demanded by yourselves, for the *avowed* purpose

pose of proving a diminution of probability, though *secretly* with further views ; this same Committee did but confirm our hopes : Even Dr. *Warren** was reduced to own, that probability was in favour of a cure ; and since the period of this examination, the most encouraging appearances have certainly taken place. Therefore, notwithstanding the private whispers, and public declarations of your party ; notwithstanding the black Minister of Disease hovers through the Capital, and sheds his poison on our hopes ; we yet have solid grounds of comfort, and even of sanguine expectation. I examine not the views of that malignant spirit, nor the promises which tempt him ; but his systematic determination is evident, and already has procured him the execration of mankind.

* This Gentleman, I understand, has lately changed his tone, and admits that his Majesty is *better* : to be consistent, the Doctor should pronounce his Royal Patient *perfectly recovered* ; for, not long ago, he maintained that there was no intermediate stage in this disorder.

2dly. It

2dly. It has been asserted, that, although his Majesty should apparently recover, he may indeed be equal to the affairs of private life, and qualified to enjoy domestic comforts, and the pleasures of society; but may still be totally unfit to resume the Government, and conduct the business of an Empire. I do not doubt, Sir, the intentions of your party on the subject; and verily believe that, when the King recovers, they will deny the cure: I consider the doctrine above-mentioned, as prophetic of your future conduct, and the argument on which you will oppose his Majesty's resumption of the Crown: but believe me, Sir, the nation will not suffer you, nor Mr. *Sheridan*, nor Mr. *Burke*; no, Sir; nor the *Prince of Wales*, to decide upon that occasion.

A third opinion, which has been spread with industry, although, from the nature of the case, it could not possibly be ascertained, is the following; that when the King is restored to health, he will *decline*, of his own accord, the management of State

affairs, and even retire to another country. Unless Lord *Loughborough*, or some of your other Caledonian friends, have the gift of second sight, I know not on what ground you can rest this supposition, or predict the future sentiments and conduct of his Majesty. For my own part, I am well persuaded that he will not abandon us to the rapine of a merciless and hungry crew.—He undoubtedly loves his people; and, even in the height of his disorder, his mind, I am told, was ever fraught with the tenderest anxiety for their happiness. Will he then love us with less fervency, when he finds how zealous we have been in his defence, how firmly we have guarded his prerogative, how bitterly we have mourned his loss, how earnestly we implore his restoration? Will the warmth of our attachment, and the steadiness of our allegiance incline him to desert us? I cannot—I will not think it. In the mean time, I give you credit for endeavouring to verify the prediction: for assuredly the *King* would not resume the Government if the possibility of resumption were precluded; nor would he stay in Eng-

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land to be the *shadow* of a King, and permit another to enjoy the substance.

It is the evident design and tendency of these opinions, to direct the eyes of men upon the *Prince of Wales*, as the actual and established Sovereign ; * and by exciting their political hopes and fears, to create that secret influence in Parliament, against which you have formerly contended. Indeed I do not ground this opinion upon inference alone, for it was openly avowed in the House of Commons. What else can be the meaning of your black and treasonous assertion, “ that the the King is no longer entitled to our allegiance ; ” and that “ we must now transfer it to the *Prince of Wales*. ” To this I will subscribe, when you persuade me to withdraw from my native country the respect, attachment, and enthusiasm, with which she fires me, and transfer those sentiments

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* When poor *Burke* declares in Parliament, that, “ The Supreme Being has hurled the Sovereign from his Throne, and reduced him to a level with the meanest Peasant ; ” do we feel more indignation at the sentiment, or more pity for the Speaker ? —

timents to you, because you *represent* her in the House of Commons. We admire the brightness, and acknowledge the convenience of the planet which adorns the night ; but we remember also, that it shines with borrowed light, and derives its splendour from that majestic luminary, whose return dispels the gloom, and reanimates the world.

4th, There is another fabrication, of which I think it right to take some notice, because it was intended to counteract our hopes of the King's recovery. I allude to the illiberal attacks upon the character of *Dr. Willis*, whose worth, benevolence, and skill, the country in which he lives will readily attest. It is true, that he has some peculiarities, which to you may appear defects : he was never conversant with political intrigues, nor aware that they form a necessary branch of his profession : he was even ignorant, that Medical reputation, must be sought for at the toilette and the tea-table ; and that his endeavours to restore his patient should be subservient to the views of opposition. Simple in his manner, plain in his
discourse,

discourse, he is not fit to cope with the subtlety of *Mr. Sheridan*; he is easily ensnared by fraud and artifice, and knows not how to deal with those who persecute and perplex him : yet independent as he is, of any party, and not involved in any politics, he is in, my opinion, the better qualified for his present situation on those accounts.

5th, It would have been surprising, if at this conjuncture *Mr. Pitt* had escaped the obloquy with which he is honoured by your party, upon most occasions : I therefore was not surprised when I heard his conduct in this delicate emergency attributed to selfish and clandestine motives. His fame however is too well established to be injured by vague hints or impudent assertions : his integrity is almost proverbial ; and though many of your friends may treat it with contempt, I believe the nation at large considers it as an eligible quality in a Minister : it is certainly unusual, and will in vain be looked for in the future Government. I can readily conceive that *Mr. Pitt's* professions, in respect to his conduct when out of power,

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will not be credited by opposition: we are apt to judge of others by ourselves; and according to this rule, how is it possible that you should trust the moderation or consistency, or veracity of *Mr. Pitt*? It is remarkable, however, that in your present attack upon his character, you discover the same marks of incongruity, which have attended you throughout the business: for whilst you accuse him of selfish motives, you also menace him with the anger of the *Prince of Wales*, and assure him, that his present system will exclude him irretrievably from the favour of his Royal Highness:—to debar himself the prospect of indulging a bad passion, is indeed a singular proof of its existence. The truth is, he has gained immortal honour by his conduct: moderate, but firm, he fought at once to establish the Rights of the Constitution, and secure the interests of the Monarch: and whilst regardless of himself, he incurred, as you say, the anger of his Royal Highness, by a strict attention to his duty, he was never wanting in that Respect, which is due to the elevated station of an Heir Apparent. Nay, even with
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regard to *you*, he displayed a candour that wrested awkward commendations from *Mr. Burke*. With that ill fortune which is apt to wait on vicious policy, you have really conferred a benefit, where you meant to do an injury; and by the striking contrast of your behaviour, have contributed to raise the Minister in our opinion, even higher than he stood before.

I am aware that having thus expressed my sentiments, I shall be called a Partizan of *Mr. Pitt*: were it true, I see nothing reprehensible in the charge: but in fact, I barely had the honour of being known to him at College, and have scarcely seen him since he became a public man: I never held of him, nor solicited, any situation, nor ever have received from him any favours of any denomination. I confess myself, indeed, the Partizan of virtue: I acknowledge my attachment to the *merits* but not the *person* of the Minister. He has restored the credit, and extended the Commerce of this Country: he has given her prosperity at home, and consequence abroad. As an Englishman I thank him for these benefits; every honest Englishman unites

in this tribute of applause ; and you, Sir, who so recently have left the Continent, can testify the exalted admiration with which he is regarded by Foreign Nations. That he has never erred, I will not pretend to say, for who is totally exempt from errors ? but in him they certainly have not been frequent or considerable ; and, which is yet more essential, they cannot be imputed to bad intentions : by mistake he may have acted wrong ; but, I verily believe, never by design. Let us advert for instance to a measure, which has been censured more than any other ; a measure on which you built the remnant of your ship-wrecked hopes, (though allowing the Minister to be highly culpable, it must be acknowledged, that one man's fault is a very bad foundation for another's popularity ;) do you imagine, Sir, that *Mr. Pitt* proposed the Shop-tax with a view to tyrannize the Metropolis ? the supposition would imply, that he is devoid of common sense, as well as honesty ; for such the Minister must be who wantonly provokes the odium of such a place as this. I do not examine whether the tax in question
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be fair or partial : I maintain only that he could not *intend* it as a measure of injustice and oppression.

It has been alledged however, by the enemies of *Mr. Pitt*, that he is addicted to the vice of chastity ; and I own that I am not enough acquainted with the *interiour* of his private life, to know the truth of this dreadful accusation. If he has the merit of incontinence, he has at least the modesty to hide it ; and I certainly cannot undertake to prove in his defence, that he has debauched the wives of other men, and disturbed the happiness of families ; not to have engaged in these exploits, or not to publish them, may injure his reputation in the fashionable world, but possibly may not render him less honest as a man, or less able as a Minister.

Perhaps, however, a Minister may be looked on as a fair object of abuse : perhaps too, when you insinuate the badness of his motives on this occasion, you may speak the real sentiments of your heart, not believing the existence of political integrity. But, with what arguments can you palliate the cruel and

impious attacks made on the character of another person, the most exalted of her sex, both in qualities and station ? who, it seems, had not already miseries enough, though, besides the illness of a husband, whom she loves, she was doomed to sorrow *sharper than a Serpent's tooth* ?——I thought there was a sanctity in woe, that malignity itself would reverence.

To scatter unprovoked and unmerited abuse is always diabolical ; but to seize the moment of distress ;—to lacerate with public scandal, the heart which is throbbing with domestic griefs—I had hoped there was not a monster capable of such depravity ; at least I hoped that he could not be a Briton.—Yet, although in the present age neither sex, nor station, nor extraordinary merit, nor calamity itself, can secure us from the venom of malevolence, the minds of honest men, I trust, cannot be poisoned by such licentious defamation ; they will not forget the striking virtues of her character,—the due discharge of moral and religious duties, the exemplary cast of her domestic life :
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they will reflect, that she never was suspected, at any period, of engaging in cabals; that her heart and her understanding equally secured her from such a line of conduct; that it argues folly, as well as malice, to suppose that, in the present case, sinking as she is beneath the pressure of misfortune, she would consent to abjure the system she had happily pursued, and involve herself in all the danger of a crooked policy.

This, Sir, is not the vain language of panegyric; but the rooted sentiments of a nation which admires her high endowments, and venerates her splendid virtues:—And can you seriously think, that she, whom the rude tongue of slander hath seldom ventured to molest; who, since her first arrival in this country, has uniformly grown in our estimation, can be injured by the miserable malice of your banditti? No, Sir! notwithstanding the violence of disappointed Faction,—notwithstanding the pestilential blast of calumny,—this exalted woman will ever be the object of our love and veneration. Even the present age will vindicate her me-
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rits, and history shall record them, for the instruction of posterity.

And after all, what is the sum of these accusations? Why, simply, that the Queen is guilty of the heinous crime of wishing for the King's recovery, and is eager to impart her hopes, and impress them on the nation. But we are told, she has no right to interfere: who then has the right? If a tender and affectionate wife be not a proper person to take care that the physicians do their duty, I beg to know who is the proper person. To be sure no one can be blind to the filial piety of the Heir Apparent;—no one can be ignorant of the kind *solicitude* which he has marked on this occasion, nor the *amiable delicacy* which he has discovered in respect to his father's rights; but though he be *notorious* for all these qualities, yet from the analogy of law, his Royal Highness is a most improper person to interfere, because he is the Heir to his father's Crown; and the law is so ill-bred as to refuse the credit, which I, you see, am disposed to grant

grant him, for his regard to duty, and contempt of interest.

I do not think it necessary to extend my strictures on the infamous fabrications with which the world is pestered; and which I am confident, will not produce the permanent effect intended, since the drift of them is easily perceived.—But is it possible to help observing, and drawing an obvious conclusion from the remark, that, notwithstanding the great abilities, and aristocratic influence in your Party; notwithstanding all the splendour of the *rising Sun*, and the absence of the parent luminary, which, I trust, will *rise again*, (though you may think, it set for ever) notwithstanding the cabals, the promises, the threats, the falsehoods, and all the stratagems that have been employed; you could not carry a majority, even in the House of Commons; and the national opinion is decisively against you?

You have, indeed, made some little acquisitions of ingratitude and treachery: the witty Q——y, the disinterested L——n,
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are profelytes worthy of your cause. The generous P——y too, forgetful of his late professions, and the recent mark of his Sovereign's favour, has polluted his Northumbrian blood with base apostacy. That blood, however, flowed to him through a female channel, and, therefore, some allowance should be made for caprice and frailty.—Yesterday, a garter and a ribbond caught his fancy ; to-day, the Ordnance inflames his passion ;—to-morrow, perhaps, some other gewgaw will debauch him ; and thus his virtue is a prey to any suitor, the least knowing in political seduction.—But that M——y should soil the laurels he so lately earned, should abandon the duties of his office, and sneaking hither in the guise of friendship, dedicate the first-fruits of “ His blushing honours,” to the ruin of his Benefactor ;—Surely, Sir, this man outstrips the common herd of traitors, and deserves the recompence of superior infamy.—Yet, we must own, that there is one degree above it, when we contemplate the youth, who, in spite of decency and duty,—in spite of gratitude for uniform and unbounded fondness,—

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in defiance of public sentiment, and general indignation, has exhibited his callous front in the open Senate, and endeavoured to crush an unhappy father.—As to the D— of C——d,—but let us pass on to something of more importance.

These, and a few other converts, are the rotten fruit of laborious corruption ; but will they compensate the hatred of a nation ?—will the applause of Faction, and the smiles of perfidy, screen you from our execration ? No ! Sir—though we could forget your Parliamentary transgressions, yet the indecent joy, the inhuman exultation, which your party has exhibited, would alone condemn you in any heart of feeling. The alternate elevation and depression of your spirits, are the sure symptoms of violence or abatement in the King's disorder : if we meet one of you in the streets, it is needless to make enquiries ; the intelligence from Kew is written on his countenance : if he look dejected, our hopes increase ; if he smile, we tremble for the Sovereign's health, and the nation's

nation's welfare*.—Sir, this is not pleasant; but simple fact: yet you should have known, that, in the British character, no virtue is more conspicuous than humanity: nor any which the nation is more jealous of maintaining in the eyes of Europe; and shall we not resent this daring violation of it, directed too against a person whose rank demands respect, and whose character begets attachment? The *Prince* may pardon it, but the nation never can.

It is true, that you gain the immediate object for which you have been labouring; we shall probably behold you once more the minister of this country: but I will venture
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* The following anecdote is authentic, and exhibits a specimen of opposition sympathy. In the early part of his *Majesty's* disorder, a certain Peer, of theatrical notoriety, on entering a Ducal house, was surrounded by a crowd of harpies; his aspect was more forlorn than even nature had intended it, and, with a tone of tragical despair, he informed them that the news he brought was very bad. "Bad news! they all exclaimed,—*what then is the king better?*"—Yes, thank heaven! he *is* better; his recovery shall check their transports, and overwhelm their projects with ruin and confusion.

to affirm that no administration ever commenced with so much ignominy as your's will do ; in contradiction to the well-known sentiments of the monarch ; in defiance too of Parliamentary opinion, and national discontent. I am almost surprized, that (even *unbounded as your stomach is*) you can either wish, or dare to accept the government upon such conditions : for how is it possible that you should prosper ?——You will tell me, perhaps, that most of your friends had nothing to lose, and much to gain ; that their character was blasted, and their views destroyed : *domi inopia, foris æs alienum ; mala res spes multo asperior* ; that to desperate conditions desperate expedients must be applied ; in short, that reduced as they are, to the last stake, they must hazard a rash game, and try to juggle the opponents whom they cannot fairly overcome. How far political morality may approve these maxims, I do not know ; but certain I, am that we should carefully watch the Party which is guided by them.

In the mean time, proceed in your established course ; continue to select each abandoned profligate for your social intercourse, each noble idiot for the tool of your ambition. Let the worthy Duke, who is neither wearied nor ashamed to be the slave of such a crew, let him preside at the Board of Treasury, though his knowledge of that department be confined to the first rudiments of arithmetic.—Drag the modern Cincinnatus—not from the plough indeed, but—-from the chace, and force him on the bench of the Exchequer. He is, I believe, an honest man ; (it is proper to exhibit a few such for ostentation ;) but an honest man is not, of necessity, an able financier ; and I doubt his Lordship will make a despicable figure after *Mr. Pitt*. But the Exchequer will, in reality, perhaps, be under *your* direction ; and, upon this hypothesis, it might be curious to guess the system which will be adopted. Will you apply to the public burthens the same alleviation which has been so useful in your own distresses, and establish a State-Faro for the liquidation of our debt ? then might youths of fortune

tune be enticed to ruin, on the principles of public spirit, and patriotic zeal ; they might be invited to devote themselves, like Curtius, for the welfare of their country, and to perish in the dark gulph of a sinking fund.

As to the seals, let them be committed to my *Lord C—f f—e* ; with a head fertile in mischief, and a heart incapable of remorse, he may serve you well ;—yet, beware,—he is versed in falsehood, and has been accustomed to betray. To prove your zeal for the happiness of Indostan, let *Mr. Sheridan* have that department ; and invest him also with the charge of reading lectures to his pupil on the practice of filial duty : we remember that he is singularly fitted for that employment.—Let not your efforts for the virtuous *Jack Townshend* cease with his election ; but procure for him some office suitable to his merits :—in short, let every appointment be an insult on our patience ; but do not fancy that your triumph will be durable, nor that the people will long submit to be governed by you. Experience has taught them to know you thoroughly ; and, though the feelings of

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humanity and affection did not rouse them in the cause of their insulted Sovereign, their interest alone would determine their aversion to *Mr. Fox*. In one word, Sir, you must accept the mingled sentiment, with which they admire your talents, and detest your principles.

From you, Sir, I turn with pleasure to address my fellow-subjects. I conjure them to persevere in those exertions, which have, hitherto, been crowned with honour and success. Let us not abandon our unhappy Monarch, who, though fast recovering, is yet unable to resist the malice of his enemies: let us soften the adversity of him in whose prosperity we shared: let us form a shield around his sacred person, and protect it from iniquity and insult. At the period (for which we pray) when we shall once more attend him to the throne with transport and acclamation, he shall thank us for our fidelity; he shall consecrate the evening of his life to prove his gratitude for our attachment, and his tenderness for our welfare. Above all, my countrymen,

countrymen, let us narrowly observe the conduct of those men, who have perpetrated foul enormities to *gain* their power, who will shrink from nothing to *secure* it: let it be our care, as it is our interest, to guard the fabrick of prosperity, which is reared by a vigorous and upright Minister.

Feb. 13, 1789.

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